

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, March 18, 2010, 7 p.m.

ARC, 1701 W. Ash

MINUTES

Commission Present: Terry Kloepfel, Marin Blevins, Bill Pauls, Dan Devine, Gary Kespohl, Sue Davis, Meredith Donaldson

Commission Absent: None (Kloepfel left meeting at 7:45 pm)

Staff Present: Mike Hood, Mike Griggs, Tammy Miller

Kloepfel called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Agenda: The agenda was approved on a motion by Blevins, seconded by Pauls.

Minutes: The minutes were approved on a motion by Pauls, seconded by Davis.

Monthly Report: Kloepfel asked about an item on the monthly report regarding the maintenance of the houses at the Gans Creek Recreation Area?

Griggs said the homes were heated over the winter and staff would check on them to ensure they were secure and there were no problems such as burst pipes.

Blevins asked if the problems that occurred at the ARC last fall with break-ins were resolved?

Hood said that none had been reported in months.

The February monthly report was approved on a motion by Devine, seconded by Blevins.

Visioning Presentation – Dee Dokken

Dokken made a presentation to the Commission on behalf of the Visioning Committee. She invited the Commission and staff to a meeting on March 22 to discuss the progress of the committee and get input.

Dokken reviewed a performance measure document with the Commission to get input. In many cases, many of the measures are already in practice or part of the Parks Master Plan.

One of them was a land dedication ordinance, which Kloepfel told Dokken, the Commission has recommended numerous times over the years. However, it has never been recommended by Planning and Zoning or acted upon by the Council.

Blevins mentioned that he and Devine had discussed it informally with the Council at a meeting the previous year but nothing formal had been discussed lately.

Another item that was discussed was expansion of the volunteer program. Hood told Dokken that Parks and Recreation led all city departments in the amount of volunteer hours by a substantial amount. These hours don't include volunteer coaches or officials. Staff turns in reports to the Office of Community Services to document the hours.

Dokken asked why the number of hours have decreased?

Hood answered it may be because one or two large volunteer projects may not have occurred over the past year, which would affect numbers.

Dokken asked about collaborations with the county, and the Commission gave the Atkins property, Dix Park and MKT Trail as examples. Devine pointed out it was difficult to always collaborate, because the County does not have a dedicated parks and recreation budget.

The committee's performance measures included the need for a special interest coordinator. Hood said that funding for any new positions is an issue right now. None have been added lately.

Donaldson questioned whether such a position would be a priority?

Hood said an assessment would have to be done, but likely there would be higher priorities for new positions in the department.

Another position discussed was an acquisitions agent, which Hood said may be shared with another department if that would happen.

Dokken then reviewed the long-term outcomes for parks, recreation, greenways and trails. Some of these are difficult to measure, but could be done through surveys, tracking attendance numbers and possible spot counts on the trails.

Blevins thanked Dokken for coming and asked if there were any other questions?

There weren't and Dokken thanked the Commission, saying that Parks and Recreation was one of the first areas to be reviewed, namely because so many things are already being accomplished.

Dog Park Report

Hood presented a report to the Commission regarding the possibility of adding a dog park or off-leash area to Stephens Lake Park. The City Manager had requested that the Commission review the possibility and make a recommendation to City Council.

Current off-leash areas in the park system are featured at Cosmo Park, Grindstone Nature Area, and Hinkson Woods Recreation Area. Dog parks are featured at Twin Lakes Recreation Area, Garth Nature Area and a planned one at Indian Hills.

Hood described the potential of a dog park at Stephens Lake Park by talking about the park in two parts. The western portion consists of developed recreation areas and the east side has open space but is planned for arboretum development as cited in the park's master plan.

The east side of the park also features a play field that is heavily used by local teams and the Show Me State Games, as well as a stream bank restoration project and the Riechmann Pavilion which is a high use facility. There are also tentative plans to build a Discovery Garden in that area of the park, which would consist of themed gardens tied together with walkways. It would cost about \$60,000 to build the Discovery Garden, likely through private donations. This is not included in the master plan, and a dog park would fit in that location instead. However, additional parking would have to be built. A total cost for a high quality dog park to match the standards of Stephens Lake Park would be about \$84,000. There is no funding source for this right now.

Devine asked if there would have to be additional parking for the Discovery Garden?

Hood said there might, but staff mostly sees this as a "come and go" location.

Pauls agreed, saying that dog parks are usually heavily concentrated at certain times of the day, saying that the evenings at the Garth dog park are usually very busy.

Hood shared advantages and disadvantages of having the dog park at Stephens Lake Park.

Advantages would be: centrally located in the City, space is available for dog park and appropriate parking, nearby residences, and high use of Stephens Lake Park. Potential disadvantages: not part of park master plan, incompatible with arboretum development, space already being used, concerns from neighbors about noise, aesthetics, high cost, some special uses of park may see dog park as a detriment, leading to loss of revenue.

Donaldson added she would be concerned about potential run-off into the nearby creek.

Kespohl asked Hood how many residents had come forward and expressed interest in a dog park at Stephens Lake?

Hood responded he did not know.

Pauls expressed opposition to the idea, saying a dog park does not seem to fit in with Stephens Lake Park and its current uses. He said he liked the master plan in its current state.

Donaldson agreed, saying she lives close to the park and is a dog owner, but would not be in favor of a dog park at that location.

Devine said he was concerned that adding a dog park would require revisiting the entire master plan and starting from scratch with public hearings.

Blevins stated he would be very concerned with loss of revenue from the many weddings and private parties held at Riechmann, if a dog park would make that site less attractive.

The Commission voted to accept and support a staff report on the subject.

Kespohl moved, seconded by Pauls, to recommend to Council that staff be directed to:

- **Continue with the original Stephens Lake Park “Park and Arboretum” Master Plan, without a dog park.**
- **Continue with the preparation of individual park master plans that may or may not include dog parks or off-leash areas.**
- **Evaluate other parks and where allowed, other City owned sites for potential dog parks or off-leash areas.**

Voting in favor of the motion: Blevins, Pauls, Devine, Kespohl, Davis, Donaldson

MPRA Conference Report

Blevins commented that the sessions he attended at the conference were worthwhile. Davis agreed, saying she was able to attend six sessions. She appreciated the variety of topics available and said she enjoyed the Hall of Fame presentation as well. Davis commented on a session she went to by the City of O’Fallon regarding a Healthy Community ACHIEVE grant and said she picked up some materials on community evaluation. She said it seemed that Columbia was doing many of those things already. Hood said that the City of Columbia had actually competed for that same grant. Only 10 communities nationwide were selected.

Pauls added that he enjoyed the tours and sessions he attended. He said the conference were always worthwhile and encouraged other commissioners to attend if they ever had the opportunity.

Park Names Discussion

Hood reminded the Commission that there are two park properties needing to be named: the Ash and Clinkscales property and the Jeff Smith property off of Waco Road. He told the Commission that he had heard from the Smiths, and that they wished to name the park for Mr. Smith’s recently deceased mother, Norma Sutherland Smith Park. Hood then added that he and Ron Shy had been trading phone messages regarding the Ash and Clinkscales property. His last message was that Mr. Shy wanted to discuss the naming in more detail but would be out of town for several days. Hood said he would talk with him about it when he returned.

Donaldson moved to table the park naming issue until the April meeting, seconded by Pauls. All in favor, motion passed.

Council Items

Hood informed the Commission of these Council actions:

Gans Creek Recreation Area/Philips Park Master Plan: following a report from the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Council will set a public hearing on the plan. Council members were supportive of the process thus far, Hood said.

Indian Hills Park improvements: include dog park, cul-de-sac and new parking lot. The neighborhood is supportive, after several public meetings and addressing many of their concerns.

Kespohl commented that he had attended a meeting and thought one concern was parking in case of large disc golf tournaments. He said street parking may not work in those instances.

Hood agreed, saying that the lot may have to be expanded at some point.

Lange Park: public hearing on Lange will be on April 5. This is a neighborhood park that will be developed as part of an agreement with the school district adjacent to Lange Middle School. It is proposed to feature a shelter, playground, open play field and perimeter trail. The school is also interested in facilities such as a running track, which would be open to the public in non-school hours. The school would be responsible for the maintenance of the track.

Devine asked what the surface would be?

Hood said it would be a crushed gravel surface. This will be the last school project as promised in the last park sales tax ballot issue. It will be the eighth such project.

Capital Projects

Griggs shared these updates:

Rock Quarry Park: full court basketball is complete.

L.A. Nickell: improvements have been made at the clubhouse with new paint, baseboards, and cabinets at the concession counter.

Lake of the Woods: new tournament scoreboard has been installed.

Eastport: trail is under development and recent Treekeepers project took place.

MKT bridges: the original structure of #12 is being removed with some pieces being saved for historical purposes. #13 bridge is about 80 percent complete.

PMC: exterior siding has been replaced and building face and entrance are under construction.

American Legion: fencing has been removed on smaller field.

Douglass Park: construction of sprayground is going well; May 1 is target opening date. Baseball field is being re-seeded.

PMC tree nursery: new trees are being planted in a gravel bed, which makes it less traumatic for them to be pulled out and replanted.

Recreation Services Update

Hood shared updates on behalf of Erika Coffman, who is in Washington D.C. representing MPRA:

Golf: The season is underway with adult golf lessons beginning at the end of April and junior golf lessons starting in June when school is out.

Preschool: programs going well.

Zumba at SLAC: New class being held at Stephens Lake Activity has been successful as has martial arts classes.

Upcoming events: Train Show, Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt, Egg Hunt EGGstravaganza, Tons of Trucks, Kite Flying Day, Family Fun Fest

Commission Comments

Kespohl asked about the status with the CYBA facility?

Hood said staff wanted to meet with CYBA board members to discuss it in more detail, but no date had been set yet.

Kespohl then asked about the extension of non-motorized federal funds, if Parks and Recreation would have anything to do with that?

Hood said that it would be up to the City, not necessarily the department. It would be hard to say how a possible extension would affect Parks and Recreation.

Staff Comments

Hood told the Commission that they are invited to lunch on April 10 at Kiwanis Park. The Kiwanis Club is having a work day there and would like Commissioners to join them. Invitations were distributed.

Public Comments

None.

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.